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ABSTRACT

Ways for teachers to implement peer-teaching activities, both same-age within a classroom and cross-age with other classrooms or schools are described. A guide for training students in interpersonal skills and teaching methods is provided. A section on games in the classroom and directions for making games for students to take home is included. (Author/JD)

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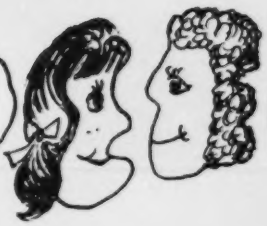
THE TEACHER'S POOR TEACHING HANDBOOK



21 WAYS TO GET STARTED

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by Lynn Gray

THE TEACHER'S

PEER TEACHING HANDBOOK

21 WAYS TO GET STARTED

By LYNN GRAY

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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The children in the schools, whose enthusiasm, diligence and inventiveness added much to the development of the peer teaching activities and educational games presented in this manual.

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WHY PEER TEACHING?

"Nobody ever really learns anything until they teach it to someone else" . . . James Russell Lowell

Anytime children work together in pairs or in groups, in fact, anytime children are permitted to talk to each other or work together during instructional time, peer teaching takes place. Some form of peer teaching goes on in every classroom, usually of an informal nature. If often consists of faster students helping slower students. They are not always willing, and their superior attitude may be evident. Because students are seldom trained in interpersonal relationships and teaching techniques, peer teaching is not always as beneficial as it could be.

Good peer teaching doesn't just happen. This manual is designed to offer teachers practical methods to encourage students in teaching and helping relationships. The teacher must be willing to spend time planning and supervising peer teaching activities and providing adequate training to give all students a positive experience.

A formal peer teaching plan has many advantages. Additional individualized instruction made available in the classroom is helpful in classrooms where there are wide ranges of abilities. Groups that are far ahead or behind can work together productively. The creative skills of the students often lead to new teacher methods and concepts. The teacher's role can change from authoritarian to friendly consultant, helping to lessen discipline problems.

Instruction tailored to individual achievement levels and learning styles can produce dramatic academic gains (see Where It's Worked) as well as increased creative thinking and communication skills. The opportunity for one student to help another promotes both respect for self and an understanding of others; it satisfies the basic need to be needed. Through training and a positive helping experience, students become more aware of others as individuals, each with special needs, requiring care and understanding.

Peer teaching results in students becoming more accepting of and more acceptable to each other; without acceptance, children's learning can be seriously hampered. Participation in this program encourages students to develop responsibility for their own learning and to begin to work independently.

An important untapped resource in our schools may very well be the students themselves, as self-learners and as teachers of other students. One of the greatest gifts we can give our young people is the gift of giving of themselves.

WHERE IT'S WORKED

Exerpts from an article appearing in the Pittsburgh Post Gazette, June 14, 1978.

During the past year, students in five classrooms at Larimer and McKelvy Elementary Schools and Reizenstein Middle School have been participating in a program called peer education, in which students take turns conducting drills and lessons for small groups . . .

"They like having the responsibility of going to the board and checking other students' work," third grade teacher Nancy Kramer explained yeaterday while her students worked on math problems in groups of four . . .

"Peer invluence can be damaging if it is exerted against cooperating with the teacher," said Mrs. Gray, who conducted workshops for teachers and students in the teaching method. "It can be a devastating hardship for the teacher. If it can be switched around so you don't gain status by putting other kids down and harassing the teacher but by helping other people, the atmosphere is improved." . . .

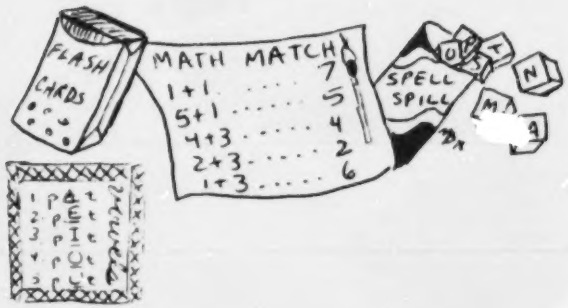
The students designed many of the games and drills themselves and were taught ways to correct other students' work without being too critical . . .

The "teachers" don't have to know the right answer, they just have to get everyone working. It makes them feel good because they assume leadership. Some of them are so used to being on the bottom . . .

Michael Papa, a fifth grade teacher whose class started out helping third graders, said students couldn't wait to volunteer to teach and they sometimes behave better once they've experienced "what a teacher has to go through to discipline a class" . . .

Miss Kramer said, with students teaching, she has an opportunity to observe how they learn in groups, how they make decisions and who needs remedial help. . . .

EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM



In a third grade classroom at McKelvey, a Pittsburgh inner-city school, the teacher used peer teaching techniques and math games extensively. The Metropolitan Achievement math test score profile for this class was 2.5 in October and 3.8 in May – a gain of 1.3 grade equivalent units. Normal growth for this period is .7. Stanine scores went fror the fourth to the sixth stanine.

At Larimer, another Pittsburgh inner-city school, the students in one third grade classroom spent five periods a week teaching each other math in small groups. They also played math and language arts games two periods a week under the tutelage of fifth graders. The Metropolitan Achievement scores for this class went from 2.5 in October to 3.7 in May – an increase of .5 over expected gains, and the class moved from the fourth to the fifth stanine. Pre and post-testing of specific math and language arts skills also demonstrated dramatic gains.

The fifth graders at Larimer who played teaching games with the third graders went from 4.7 to 5.4 in math skills, a gain over the norm of .2. Stanines did not change. All three teachers attribute much of this success to the peer teaching and game playing activities.

In addition, teachers of these students reported substantial improvements in independent work ability, attitude toward learning, cooperation, self-image, helpfulness toward other students, and lessened discipline problems. A few direct quotes:

"It helped an enormous amount in learning the multiplication tables, and they still had fun."

"They were more eager to learn, so they could show off what they learned to the others."

"I don't have to tell them to start to work – they begin eagerly by themselves."

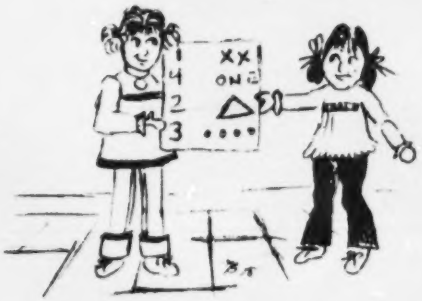
"It was especially helpful for some of the children who never get a chance to shine."

"At the beginning of the program they couldn't even begin to put a sentence together. After playing the sentence games, nearly all of them can write a pretty good sentence."

"Students become more aware that everyone learns at a different rate – they are not so quick to criticize or laugh at another student."

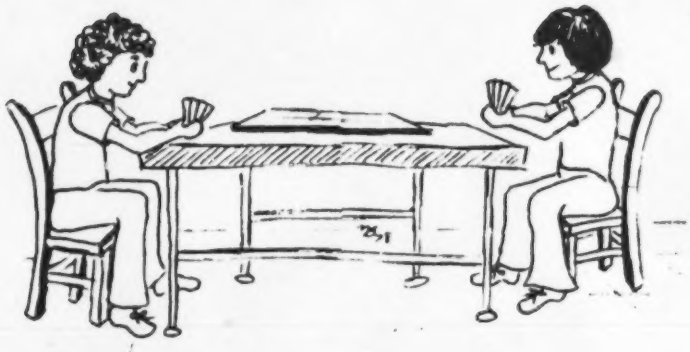
HOW IT WORKS

SAME AGE TEACHING



Students at the same ability level can work together productively in many ways, and there are a number of methods for students of varying abilities to help each other. Care must be taken, however, not to always place the "smarter" students in the teacher role. Some students can handle such a role graciously, while others tend to become bossy or arrogant, and, consciously or unconsciously, damage the ego of the less advanced student. Some suggestions – students can:

- Drill each other with flash cards, word lists, textbooks, workbooks or ditto sheets.
- Play learning games in pairs or small groups.
- Listen to each other read.
- Dictate spelling words, or other material to be memorized, to each other.
- Work out math problems or other assignments as a pair or team.
- Find answers together to questions that require research skills.
- Take turns being the "teacher" to a group of three or more students, or to the entire class. Several teachers have reported that allowing the student to assume the teachers' role is similar to seeing oneself on videotape, as the students tend to minic the teachers' mannerisms, speech patterns and teaching style remarkably well.
- Arrange for students who have mastered certain skills to tutor other students several times a week, following the guidelines presented in the section on cross-age teaching.
- Study groups of students of similar or varying abilities can help each other study for a quiz or an assignment.
- A pair of students, a small group or a whole class can learn together through the use of games. (See Game Section)
- Arrange a brief discussion period after a new concept has been introduced. The teacher can say to the students, "If there is anything you don't understand, ask some one who does."
- Provide information on homework or assignments, or explain a missed lesson to students who have been absent or are tardy.
- Utilize learning centers to provide opportunities for students to help each other understand directions and work together to complete assigned tasks.
- Set up contracts requiring the cooperative effort of two or more students.



- Correct each other's work. (Students will need some training on the proper way to correct papers, as they tend to be quite critical, more so than the teacher.)
- Slower students can teach nonacademic skills. For example, one teacher showed two students how to prepare pots and plant seeds. These students in turn taught the other students, giving them the opportunity to be good at something. Other possibilities include giving directions for using AV equipment, playing games, preparing special projects.
- Make up problems, work sheets and quizzes for other students. Some of these papers can be duplicated on ditto masters, a big ego boost for the students who have the satisfaction of seeing their work in print.
- Teachers of remedial math classes can bring back "graduates" to help teach the other children.
- Arrange team games. By dividing a class into two or more teams, there is the advantage of competition, which tends to motivate and excite children, without the disadvantages of individual competition; there is safety and security within the team structure. Students on the same team can "coach" each other on the material to be covered in the games.
- A new teaching system called My Team Learnball is rapidly gaining supporters. The class is divided into two teams, and points are awarded to each team for completed assignments, correct answers, good discussion comments, careful listening, etc. Failure to meet class requirements, disruptive behavior, or rule breaking (many of the rules are made by the students) adds to the score of the opposing team. Additional points may be scored by throwing a small "nerf" ball through a hoop, adding an element of athletic skill and suspense to the game. Information may be obtained from My Team Learnball League, Box 2152, Pittsburgh, PA 15230.
- Another commercial package on the market is called "Teams-Games-Tournament," (TGT). Students are divided into teams of four for practice, coaching, and then tournament play covering material on any subject. Pittsburgh Public School teachers may borrow a TGT kit from the Middle School Teacher Center.

There are other less formal ways to promote peer teaching in the classroom. The teacher's attitude toward peer helping is an important factor. If the children feel they can and should help each other, they will think of a number of creative ways that may not occur to the teacher. Conducting several whole-class training sessions is another way to encourage peer teaching. (See Training Section)

MAKING PEER TEACHING ACTIVITIES WORK

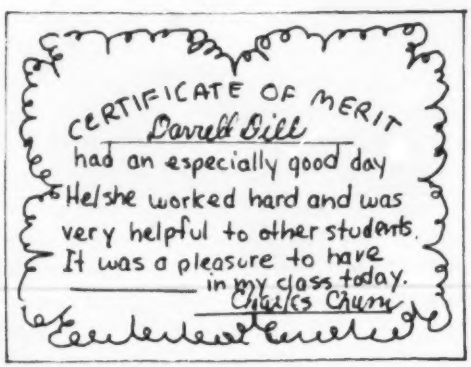
Children are not necessarily natural teachers. Without guidance and supervision, they may transmit negative feelings to the student needing help, or in other ways be counter-productive. One or more whole-class training sessions, similar to the type of training that olders receive in formal cross-age teaching programs, are recommended before peer teaching begins, and "in-service" discussion sessions should be held throughout the year. Guidelines for training students can be found in the training section.

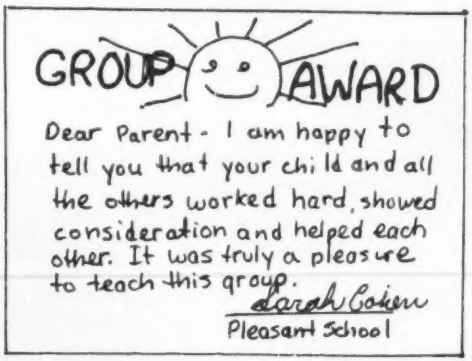
To minimize discipline problems that may occur when a new activity is introduced, it is helpful first to discuss expected behavior. Explain the planned activity and the objectives, and that the students must assume responsibility for working together productively if they would like more of these kinds of activities. It is also helpful to involve the students in making necessary rules.

A new activity, no matter how entertaining or useful, can fail if one or two of the students who are admired by the others belittles it, or shows lack of interest. A good strategy is to involve some of the best liked students in the planning, or give them a leadership role when the activity is introduced. Their support of the activity will influence the entire class.

Whenever possible allow students to form their own groups or pairs. Although this may sometimes cause behavior problems, they will be more willing to work seriously if they feel they have some choice in work-mates.

Some students are reluctant to help others because they don't want to take time from their own classroom work. It should be emphasized that helping others is a good way to learn and will bring up their own grade in the subject. For younger students, occasional individual or group certificates of appreciation give pleasure to both students and parents. Some students need no more encouragement than the satisfaction of seeing improvement in the work of students they have helped.


CERTIFICATE OF MERIT
Darrell Dill
had an especially good day
He/she worked hard and was very helpful to other students.
It was a pleasure to have
in my class today.
Charles Crum


GROUP AWARD
Dear Parent - I am happy to tell you that your child and all the others worked hard, showed consideration and helped each other. It was truly a pleasure to teach this group.
Sarah Cohen
Pleasant School

CROSS-AGE TEACHING

In cross-age teaching, older students (olders) are paired with students approximately two grade levels younger (youngers), for tutoring sessions, usually in reading or math. They meet several times a week and work in the younger's classroom or some unoccupied area in the building. The olders and youngers who genefit the most are those that are one or two years remedial in basic skills, have a low self-image and a poor attitude towards school and learning.

An estimated 10,000 cross-age teaching programs have been operating throughout the country for the past ten years. Extensive research has shown dramatic gains in academic and social growth for both olders and youngers.

TEACHING REPORT

Name Kelly Lewis Date 5/14

Students name (s) Carla

Skills worked on multiplication

Activities flash cards concentration one game

Comments She knew her 6 but not her 7 tables. She behaved nice.

MAKING CROSS-AGED TEACHING WORK

The sending and receiving teachers, and others involved, meet to select olders and youngers and arrange pairs. Alternate youngers are designated in case a younger is absent on a scheduled tutoring day.

After olders have been selected, they are asked to volunteer. A time limit to the commitment is set, usually eight to ten weeks. The olders must understand their obligation to be dependable and to work productively with their younger. As with peer teaching, one or more initial training sessions and periodic "in-service" sessions, are essential. (Refer to the section on training.) The older is provided with specific objectives, of a fairly short range, for the younger. It is helpful to have olders fill out a report slip after each session. The receiving teacher supplies a variety of tutoring materials other than standard textbooks including learning games. The sessions must be made interesting if both the olders and youngers are to meet with success. The receiving teacher arranges to meet periodically with the olders to discuss youngers' progress – a necessary task, and a big ego boost for the older. The entire school staff and the parents of the olders and youngers involved should be acquainted with the objectives of the program.

TRAINING PEER TEACHERS

This outline is only a guideline. Each teacher must select the elements appropriate to the grade level of the students and the type of peer teaching program planned. In many cases the training can be an end as well as a means, for it presents an opportunity to help students develop a more thoughtful, caring attitude. Furthermore, students that are trained are more likely to take initiative in helping another student.

INITIAL TRAINING

OBJECTIVES

Develop an understanding of the peer teaching concept.

Become aware of opportunities to help and teach each other.

METHODS

Discussion – "How do students in your class help each other now?"
"In what ways can other students help you learn?"

OBJECTIVES

Develop sensitivity to the feelings of others.

Understand the universal drive for acceptance and the pain of rejection or ridicule.

METHODS

Discussion – "Have you ever asked a question in front of the other students and been laughed at, ridiculed or teased? Have you ever tried to join a group and been told to get lost? How did you feel?"

Have you ever laughed at, teased or excluded someone? How do you think that person felt?"

OBJECTIVES

Develop positive relationships with the students you are helping

Understand the need to build the self-image of other students.

Realize that everyone wants to meet with success most of the time.

METHODS

Role-play a one-on-one peer teaching session. To start, play the role of the peer teacher and select a student to play the role of the learning student. Mix up "right" and "wrong" verbal and non-verbal transactions.

EXAMPLES: VERBAL

WRONG	RIGHT
"Do I have to help you again?"	"Sure, I'll be glad to help you."
"You mean you don't know this? – it's so easy."	"I had trouble learning that too – it's hard until you catch on."
"You got five wrong" (out of ten).	"You got five right" (out of ten).
"This is all wrong. Here, let me do it for you."	"How did you get that answer?" "Here, let's see if we can figure this out."
"You still don't know all your multiplication tables."	"You know your seven tables perfectly. That's great."

EXAMPLES: NON-VERBAL

Paper or book in front of teaching student.	Paper or book in front of learning student.
Sigh, make faces, look bored.	Smile sometimes, look interested.
Look around the room, or start doing your own work.	Give the learning student full attention.

Ask students to show "thumbs-up" for right, and "thumbs down" for wrong methods. Let other students take turns playing both roles and inventing their own right and wrong words and actions.

Prepare a paper or small booklet for each student, preferably illustrated, with examples of good peer teaching. Let the students help make the booklet or add their suggestions.

OBJECTIVES

Become familiar with the procedures and mechanics of peer teaching programs.

Acquire specific skills in teaching methods.

Understand the concepts of objectives, skills, activities, mastery.

METHODS

Lecture/discussion, demonstration on the blackboard or overhead projector, role playing, written directions or booklet covering some or all of these points:

Become familiar with these concepts: objectives, skills, activities, mastery.

Understand the short-range objectives for the students you teach.

*Plan instruction that is not too hard or too easy.

Have all necessary materials – be prepared.

*Be able to begin sessions without interrupting the teacher.

*Give your youngers a friendly greeting, and ask about progress since the last session.

*Explain the planned activities for each session.

Make sure both you and the other students (youngers) understand the directions for the work to be done.

Try to make your teaching interesting.

Pay attention – look interested and let them know you care.

When you explain something, make sure the student (younger) understands – check the work and also watch for clues from facial expressions – ask them to repeat what you've explained.

Sometimes things can be made clearer by demonstrating – use pencil and paper or instructional materials.

Break big learning steps into smaller steps.

Explain things in more than one way.

Give your student (younger) time to do the work – don't be too quick to provide the answer.

Prompt, hint, ask questions, but don't do the work for the students (youngers). (Exception – if you are listening to a student read, you can fill in a few of the words.)

If they try to do the work and pay attention, be encouraging – use lots of praise.

Don't worry if you don't know everything, or if you make a mistake – all teachers make mistakes and should be able to admit they're not perfect.

Review skills learned previously, and don't be discouraged if they have forgotten some of the skills you thought they knew. This happens to everyone, and that is why review is important.

*Appropriate only for cross-age training

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Beyond initial training, weekly or bi-weekly in-service discussion sessions should be scheduled for both cross-age and same age students during the course of the peer teaching program.

To facilitate discussions, divide the class into two or three groups and meet with each group separately while the rest of the students are occupied in some other manner. All students should be encouraged to take part in the discussion so they can learn from each other's experiences. The following questions are designed to encourage participation:

What happened at your first meeting?

Did you find a way to make learning interesting?

Did you have problems? How did you handle them?

Did anyone else have the same problem?

Does anyone have a suggestion for solving this problem?

MAKING AND PLAYING GAMES

GAME-PLAYING ADVANTAGES

Games are a very enjouable and effective teaching tool and should be an integral part of every school curriculum. They can be used to introduce, reinforce, review or remediate a large number of cognitive skills: logical thought, communication skills, memorization, decision-making, following directions, abstract conceptualization, and creative thinking.

In the affective domain, gaming can improve motivation, sportsmanship, cooperation, patience, and independence. Games give students an opportunity to interact positively in a controlled situation, occupy students who are ahead or behind the other students, provide a choice of learning activities and encourage peer teaching.

MANAGING GAME PLAYING

There are a number of ways to increase game-playing activities in the classroom. Schedule regular game periods and let the students play in pairs or small groups. Set up a game table for casual use. When working with a group of students, let the others play games. Include games as part of learning centers. Arrange for whole-class team games.

To assure successful game-playing make sure that the groups are compatible, the rules and directions are clear and there is sufficient variety and choice of games on the appropriate level. Allow students to modify the games and change the rules, or change rules yourself when indicated. Make sure students know what type of behavior is expected. If game-playing gets too noisy or chaotic, remove disruptive players, shorten game time, change the rules or terminate the games.

Help students understand the usefulness of game-playing. Conduct periodic "de-briefing" sessions: "What did you learn from this game?" It may be helpful to have students who play games independently fill out game report sheets. Occasionally administer pre and post tests covering specific skills that are incorporated in the games, and share the results with the students.

ACQUIRING GAMES

Borrow games from other classrooms or media centers. Ask the school principal or your school's parent group to purchase games. Encourage students to bring games from home. Make your own games or ask parents or aides to make games. Best of all, arrange game-making sessions in the classroom. Student-made games are practically free, are fun to make, can be changed frequently to suit specific objectives, and provide each student with a variety of games to play at school or take home. See the next section for directions for making games and suggestions for encouraging game-playing in the home.

GAME REPORT

Name Derek Date 3-17

Other players Christine Faith

Games played Go Fish Concentration

Skills learned tell our nouns from our verbs

Comments I like to play with Faith

GAMES IN THE HOME

Educators agree that a stimulating home environment is one of the most important requirements for success at school. One way to help improve this environment while reinforceing specific skills is to make extra games in the classroom for the students to take hom

Another way is to send home a paper with instructions on game-playing, preferably accompanied by four or more sheets of construction paper, encouraging the student and his family to make games at home. You can reproduce this flyer, or design your own, tailoring the games to fit the curriculum.

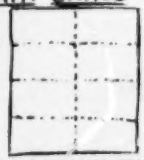
An additional advantage to games in the home is that parents can spend enjoyable and constructive time with their children.

PARENTS - THESE GAMES WILL HELP YOUR CHILDREN SUCCEED IN SCHOOL

PLAYING GAMES IS A GOOD WAY TO SPEND TIME WITH YOUR CHILDREN, AND WILL HELP THEM LEARN READING AND MATH. IT WILL ALSO HELP THEM TO PLAY FAIRLY AND GET ALONG WELL WITH OTHERS. TO MAKE THESE GAMES ALL YOU NEED IS PAPER OR CARDBOARD, SCISSORS AND FELT-TIP MARKERS. THE GAMES CAN BE ADJUSTED TO COVER AGES FROM THREE TO ADULT. KEEPING SCORE WILL MAKE THE GAMES MORE INTERESTING AND ALSO TEACH MATH.

LEARNING PAIR CARDS

CUT 3 PIECES OF CONSTRUCTION PAPER INTO 8 SECTIONS EACH, MAKING 24 CARDS.



WRITE A LEARNING PAIR ON EACH SET OF 2 CARDS. EXAMPLES:

NUMBER CONCEPTS		READING		MULTIPLICATION	
3	•••	HAT		4x9	36
OPPOSITES		**FRACTIONS**		**SYNONYMS**	
NIGHT	DAY	1/3	33%	QUIET	TRANQUIL

ALMOST ALL CHILDREN KNOW HOW TO USE THESE CARDS TO PLAY CONCENTRATION, GO FISH, OLD MAID (ADD ON AN OLD MAID CARD) OR OTHER GAMES.

SPILL THE BEANS					
6	7	9	5	4	3
4	1	7	2	6	5
6	3	2	8	2	4
8	1	5	7	9	1

SPILL THE BEANS DRAW LINES ON A PIECE OF CARDBOARD OR PAPER AND WRITE NUMBERS OR LETTERS ON EACH SQUARE. PLAYERS THROW 2 OR MORE BEANS ON THE BOARD, AND ADD, SUBTRACT, MULTIPLY, ETC, OR MAKE WORDS.

SILLY SENTENCES

WRITE WORDS ON CARDS, INCLUDING LOTS OF WORDS SUCH AS THE, A, ON, BY, ETC.

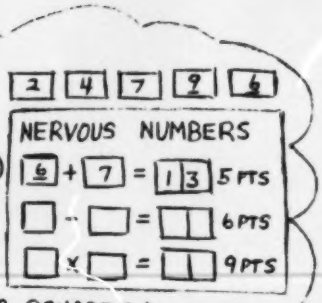
PLAYERS EACH DRAW 20 CARDS AND TRY TO MAKE SENTENCES.

SALLY	ATE	THE	FRIENDLY	ALLIGATOR

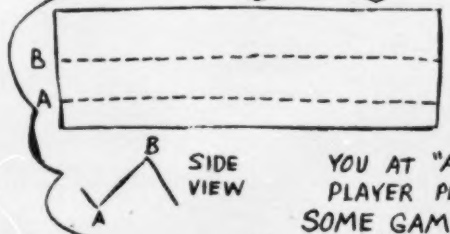
SCORE MORE FOR LONGER SENTENCES.

NERVOUS NUMBERS

EACH PLAYER MAKES A GAME BOARD AND ABOUT 50 1" SQUARES. WRITE NUMBERS FROM 1 TO 9 (ALSO ZEROS) ON EACH SQUARE, 5 TIMES (50 NUMBERS) EACH PLAYER PLACES HIS NUMBER SETS FACE DOWN ON A TABLE, TURNS THEM UP ONE AT A TIME, AND RACES AGAINST OTHER PLAYERS, OR AGAINST TIME, TO SCORE POINTS BY FILLING THE BOARD WITH CORRECT NUMBER SENTENCES. USE TWO NUMBER SQUARES FOR DOUBLE-DIGIT NUMBERS.

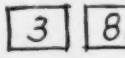


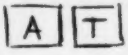
NUMBER OR LETTER SQUARES

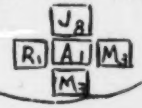


CUT 50 OR MORE 1½" SQUARES. WRITE NUMBERS OR LETTERS ON THE SQUARES. FOR EACH PLAYER, MAKE A RACK BY CUTTING A 3½" X 10" PIECE OF CARDBOARD OR HEAVY PAPER, FOLD TOWARD YOU AT "A" AND AWAY FROM YOU AT "B". EACH PLAYER PLACES 7 SQUARES ON HIS RACK.

SOME GAMES: ONE PLAYER PLACES THE NUMBER 6 ON THE TABLE. IF THE NEXT PLAYER CAN PLAY A NUMBER TO MAKE A TOTAL OF 10, HE PLAYS HIS SQUARE (#4) AND KEEPS THE TWO SQUARES. OR THE WINNER COULD BE THE FIRST PLAYER TO REACH A TOTAL OF 25, OR MULTIPLY NUMBERS TO TOTAL OVER 200. PLAYERS COULD TAKE TURNS PLAYING A LETTER IN THE MIDDLE. WHEN A PLAYER ON HIS TURN CAN MAKE A WORD, HE KEEPS THOSE SQUARES. YOU CAN ALSO ADD A NUMBER AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SQUARE AND PLAY WITHOUT A SCRABBLE BOARD.







- "This booklet is full of good ideas that are simple enough for any teacher to put into practice."
  — Elementary Teacher
- "Everybody grows, academically and emotionally, through peer teaching."
  — Reading Specialist
- "A manual that not only tells you what to do, it shows you how to do it."
  — Middle School Supervisor
- "The good results at our school further substantiate the advantages of students helping one another. I highly endorse this manual."
  — Principal
- "I learned a lot about myself and my teaching when I let my students teach."
  — Middle School Teacher

- "I always worked harder to learn more so I could show the third graders what to do."
  — Fifth Grade Student
- "My favorite day was Wednesday. I could be the teacher."
  — Third Grade Student
- "I THOT I WAS a REal TEACHEE. I HAD aLOT OF RESPONSIBILITY."
  — Third Grade Student
- "After dealing with Third graders I found I shouldn't act up when I'm the student."
  — Sixth Grade Student